

Amendments to the claims:

1. (Currently amended) An encrypted computer readable form embodying machine executable instructions for permitting a voter to cast a ballot by interaction with an official ballot image resulting in the creation of a cast vote record that may be transmitted to a server, comprising:

program instructions operable to convert the computer readable form from an encrypted to a decrypted state such that in the decrypted state the computer readable form includes

voter authentication code for comparing official voter authentication data against data to be provided by the voter at the voter's personal computer;

display code configured for use in displaying the official ballot image to the voter while permitting the voter to create a cast vote record by interaction with the ballot image until such time as the voter casts the ballot; and

message transmission code for use in transmitting the cast vote record to the server,

wherein the voter authentication code is configured to authenticate a voter for voting on a personal computer without requiring a server to assist in authenticating an individual voter while the display code is present on the personal computer.

2. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the ~~voter authentication code includes code for comparing official~~ voter authentication data is selected from the group consisting of a password, biometric data,

mother's maiden name, town of birth, social security number, children's birthdays, voter address, and other personal data ~~against data that is input by the voter.~~

3. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the voter authentication code includes code for comparing an official password against a password that is provided by the voter.

4. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the voter authentication code includes code for accessing a biometric authentication device.

5. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the voter authentication code includes code for accessing a device in the possession of the voter, the device being selected from the group consisting of a smart card, an optical storage device, and a magnetic storage device.

6. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable for of claim 1, wherein the voter authentication code includes code for comparing hashed authentication data against voter input data.

7. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1 including data for the official ballot image presenting the voter with all choices as they would appear on an absentee paper ballot that the voter would receive in an election.

8. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1 including data comprising the official ballot image which is accessible to the display code to

present the voter with a ballot consisting of contests in which the voter is authorized to vote.

9. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1 comprising code for checking video memory for ballot selections that are displayed to the voter against other memory containing ballot choices that the voter has made.

10. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the message transmission code includes code for encrypting the cast vote record prior to transmission.

11. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 10, wherein the message transmission includes code for implementing a secure transmission protocol in transmitting the cast vote record to an election server.

12. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the encrypted computer readable form is stored on a disk.

13. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the encrypted computer readable form is configured for download from a server.

14. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the message transmission code includes code for encrypting the cast vote record prior to transmission through use of an encryption key.

15. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 14, including code for deleting the decrypted computer readable form once the code for encrypting and the message transmission code have completed their tasks.

16. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1,

wherein the encrypted computer readable form is packaged as an object including all data that is required for voter authentication.

17. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1, wherein the encrypted computer readable form is packaged as an object including all data that is required for the voter to create a cast vote record.

18. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 1 including code for implementing a virus mitigation measure.

19. (Currently amended) The encrypted computer readable form of claim 18, wherein the virus mitigation measure is selected from the group consisting of compiled sections of executable code with a plurality of static functions in different order, the insertion of junk functions into executable code, an absence of text tags to system function calls, serialized executable file names, serialized data file headers, virus checking upon execution of the decrypted computer readable form for viruses that are known to interact with the decrypted computer readable form, and means for comparing video memory to the ballot image that is displayed to the voter.

20. (Currently amended) A method of voting using network telecommunications through use of a downloadable encrypted ballot viewer object containing an official ballot image, voter authentication information, and executable code for use in casting a ballot, the method comprising the steps of:

downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object;

decrypting the ballot viewer object to produce a decrypted ballot viewer object

authenticating a voter in association with the decrypted ballot viewer object;

displaying an official ballot image derived from the decrypted ballot viewer object;

creating a cast vote record by voter interaction with the official ballot image; and

transmitting the cast vote record to an election server

the step of authenticating the voter being performed after the step of ~~downloading~~
decrypting the ballot and before the step of transmitting the cast vote record by executing
voter authentication code from the ballot viewer object and authenticating the voter without
interacting with the server after the step of downloading the ballot viewer object.

21. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of
downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes downloading the encrypted ballot
viewer object as an email attachment.

22. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20 including a step of
storing the encrypted ballot viewer object on a server that is accessible from the Internet.

23. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 22 including a step of
notifying a voter that the downloadable encrypted ballot viewer object has been stored on the
server and is available for download prior to the downloading step.

24. (Original) The method according to claim 20 including a step of charging a
transactional fee for at least one of the downloading and transmitting steps.

25. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of
downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes downloading the encrypted ballot

viewer object through use of an official service of the United States Postal Service.

26. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes downloading through the use of a secure transmission protocol.

27. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes a step of confirming a voter by password prior to commencing the downloading step.

28. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes encrypting the ballot viewer object. for download.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of authenticating the voter includes comparing the voter authentication information with interactive input provided by a voter.

30. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 29, wherein the voter authentication information contained in the encrypted ballot viewer object is hashed and the step of authenticating the voter includes hashing the interactive input from the voter for comparison purposes.

31. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of displaying the official ballot image includes displaying an electronic replica of an absentee paper ballot that a voter would receive in an election.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 20 including a step of encrypting the cast vote record prior to the transmitting step.
33. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20 including a step of deleting the decrypted ballot viewer object and cast vote record from a voter's computer once the transmitting step is complete.
34. (Original) The method according to claim 20 including a step of sending an email confirmation message to the voter upon receipt of the cast vote record transmitted by the voter.
35. (Original) The method according to claim 34 including a step of replicating the voter's cast vote record in the email confirmation message.
36. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 20 including a step of creating the encrypted ballot viewer object to have a unique combination of voter authorization information and official ballot image information assigned to a particular voter.
37. (Original) The method according to claim 36, wherein the official ballot image information includes selecting contests for presentation in the official ballot image according to contests in which the voter is authorized to vote.
38. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the transmitting step is performed using an official server that is authorized by the United States Postal Service.
39. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the transmitting step is performed using encryption of the cast vote record.
40. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein at least one of the

downloading and transmitting steps is accomplished through use of the Internet.

41. (Original) The method according to claim 40 including a step of resolving problems that arise as a result of transmitting messages through use of the Internet.

42. (Original) The method according to claim 41, wherein the step of resolving problems includes parsing the cast vote record to identify corrupted ballot information.

43. (Original) The method according to claim 41, wherein the step of resolving problems includes preventing a single voter from casting multiple ballots.

44. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 41, wherein the step of resolving problems includes notifying the voter that an encrypted ballot viewer object has been downloaded but the transmitting step has not been completed within a predetermined amount of time since the downloading step occurred.

45. (Original) The method according to claim 41, wherein the step of resolving problems includes facilitating a subsequent download in the event of a download failure upon an initial attempt at performing the download step.

46. (Original) The method according to claim 20 including a step of protecting against virus attack.

47. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 46, wherein the protecting step includes creating the encrypted ballot viewer object by compiling sections of executable code with a plurality of static functions in different order, inserting junk functions into executable code, avoiding use of text tags to system function calls, using

serialized executable file names, using serialized data file headers, checking upon

execution of the computer readable form for viruses that are known to interact with the computer readable form, and comparing video memory to ballot selections that the voter has made.

48. (Currently amended) A system for use in voting through network telecommunications devices that transmit a downloadable encrypted ballot viewer object containing an official ballot image, voter authentication information, and executable code for use in casting a ballot, the system comprising:

means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object;

means for decrypting the encrypted ballot viewer object to provide a decrypted ballot viewer object;

means for authenticating a voter in association with the decrypted ballot viewer object;

means for displaying an official ballot image derived from the decrypted ballot viewer object;

means for creating a cast vote record by voter interaction with the official ballot image; and

means for transmitting the cast vote record to an election server,

the means for authenticating the voter being configured for operation sequentially after execution of the means for downloading the ballot and before execution of the means for transmitting the cast vote record,

the means for authenticating the voter including executable authentication code obtained from the decrypted ballot viewer object,

the executable voter authentication code not requiring interaction with a server after the ~~step of~~ downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object to complete voter authentication processing.

49. (Currently amended) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object as an email attachment.

50. (Currently amended) The system of claim 48 including means for storing the encrypted ballot viewer object on a server that is accessible from the Internet.

51. (Currently amended) The system of claim 50 including means for notifying a voter that the downloadable encrypted ballot viewer object has been stored on the server and is available for download prior to use of the downloading means.

52. (Original) The system of claim 48 including means for charging a transactional fee for use of at least one of the downloading and transmitting means

53 (Currently amended) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object through use of an official service of the United States Postal Service.

54 (Currently amended) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for

downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes means for downloading through the use of a secure transmission protocol.

55 (Currently amended) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes means for confirming a voter by password prior to use of the downloading means.

56 (Currently amended) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for downloading the encrypted ballot viewer object includes means for encrypting the a nonencrypted ballot viewer object.

57. (Original) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for authenticating the voter includes means for comparing the voter authentication information with interactive input provided by a voter.

58. (Currently amended) The system of claim 57, wherein the voter authentication information contained in the encrypted ballot viewer object is hashed and the means for authenticating the voter includes means for hashing the interactive input from the voter for comparison purposes.

59. (Original) The system of claim 48, wherein the means for displaying the official ballot image includes means for displaying an electronic replica of an absentee paper ballot that a voter would receive in an election.

60. (Original) The system of claim 48 including means for encrypting the cast vote record prior to use of the transmitting means.

61. (Currently amended) The system of claim 48 including means for deleting the

decrypted ballot viewer object and cast vote record from a voter's computer once the transmitting means has transmitted the cast vote record.

62. (Original) The system of claim 48 including a means for sending an email confirmation message to the voter upon receipt of the cast vote record transmitted by the voter.

63. (Original) The system of claim 62 including means for replicating the voter's cast vote record in the email confirmation message.

64. (Currently amended) The system of claim 48 including means for creating the encrypted ballot viewer object to have a unique combination of voter authorization information and official ballot image information assigned to a particular voter.

65. (Original) The method according to claim 64, wherein the official ballot image information includes selected contests for presentation in the official ballot image according to contests in which the voter is authorized to vote.

66. (Original) The system of claim 48, wherein the transmitting means includes transmission through an official server that is authorized by the United States Postal Service.

67. (Original) The system of claim 48, wherein the transmitting means includes means for encrypting the cast vote record.

68. (Original) The system of claim 48, wherein at least one of the downloading and transmitting means includes the Internet.

69. (Original) The system of claim 68 including a means for resolving problems

that arise as a result of transmitting messages through use of the Internet.

70. (Original) The system of claim 69, wherein the means for resolving problems includes means for parsing the cast vote record to identify corrupted ballot information.

71. (Original) The system of claim 69, wherein the means for resolving problems includes means for preventing a single voter from casting multiple ballots.

72. (Currently amended) The system of claim 69, wherein the means for resolving problems includes means for notifying the voter that an encrypted ballot viewer object has been downloaded but that a transmission from the transmitting means has not been received within a predetermined amount of time since the encrypted ballot viewer object was downloaded.

73. (Original) The system of claim 69, wherein the step of resolving problems includes facilitating a subsequent download in the event of a download failure upon an initial attempt at performing the download step.

74. (Original) The system of claim 48 including a means for protecting against virus attack.

75. (Currently amended) The system of claim 74, wherein the protecting means includes a means selected ~~from~~ from the group consisting of means for creating the encrypted ballot viewer object by compiling sections of executable code with a plurality of static functions in different order, means for inserting junk functions into executable code, an absence of text tags to system function calls, means for using serialized executable file names, means for using serialized data file headers, means for

checking upon execution of the computer readable form for viruses that are known to interact with the computer readable form, and means for comparing video memory to the ballot image that is displayed to the voter.

76. (Original) In an official postal server authorized by a national government agency for the transmission of electronic data, the improvement comprising an interface for batch control processing of electronic ballot information as directed by an election server.

77. (Previously presented) The official postal server of claim 76, wherein the interface for batch control processing includes program logic for creating and delivering electronic messages to prospective voters, the electronic messages each being configured to facilitate a download of an electronic ballot for use by an individual voter.